UNITED
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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/147
23 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 20 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I should like to call the attention of the members of the Security Council to the attached statement of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the humanitarian impact of sanctions. The Committee, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, includes representatives of United Nations organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in humanitarian assistance operations.

I believe that the statement will contribute to the deliberations of the Council and hope that members of the Council will give full consideration to the various issues raised therein.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Statement dated 29 December 1997 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to the Security Council on the humanitarian impact of sanctions

1. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee notes that sanctions have been resorted to by the Security Council and other authorities for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. The Committee expresses its concern with respect to the humanitarian impact of such measures and strongly believes that adverse humanitarian consequences on civilian populations should be avoided. The design of a sanctions regime should therefore take fully into account international human rights instruments and humanitarian standards established by the Geneva Conventions.

2. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee considers that the Security Council and other sanctions authorities would benefit from comprehensive information and objective analysis of the potential humanitarian impact of sanctions when deciding on the imposition of sanctions. They would also benefit from information on the evolution of the humanitarian requirements under a sanctions regime on a regular basis. The Committee expresses its readiness to support the Emergency Relief Coordinator in making such information and analysis available to the Security Council. To that end, the Committee has established an inter-agency technical group, drawing on the expertise within the office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as well as United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations, to further elaborate indicators to assess and monitor the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

3. Furthermore, the Committee reaffirms its view that sanctions should not impede the work of humanitarian organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in the targeted countries. It welcomes the efforts of the Security Council to ensure that humanitarian exemptions are included in sanctions regimes. It suggests that these exemptions and the exemptions procedures should be reviewed regularly and adjusted in the light of the humanitarian requirements under the sanctions regime.

4. The Inter-Agency standing Committee supports the Emergency Relief Coordinator in undertaking consultations with the Security Council on the assessments of the humanitarian impact of sanctions, as well as on exemptions procedures to ensure the timely provision of humanitarian assistance to people in need.

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Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/148
23 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 1152 (1998) CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1152 (1998) of 5 February 1998, in which the Council requested me to report, by 23 February 1998, on the situation in the Central African Republic, with recommendations regarding the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation and its financial implications, as well as information on the implementation of the Bangui Agreements and on the commitments made by the President of the Central African Republic in his letter of 8 January 1998 addressed to me.

2. The present report also provides an update on the situation in the Central African Republic since my last report, which was dated 23 January 1998 (S/1998/61). It supplements the information already contained in the third periodic report of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) of 30 January 1998 (S/1998/86). It also incorporates the findings of a small United Nations team that visited Bangui from 8 to 16 February to finalize recommendations on the mandate and concept of operations of a possible United Nations peacekeeping operation.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

3. On 28 January 1998, I addressed a letter to President Ange-Félix Patassé in order to impress on him the need to pursue vigorously efforts aimed at the full implementation of the Bangui Agreements and important political, security and economic reforms, as described in his letter of 8 January addressed to me (S/1998/61, annex). In a letter of 29 January, President Patassé strongly reiterated to me his commitment to carry out such reforms.

4. I have also followed up on the observations and recommendations made in my last report with key leaders in the region and other concerned Member States.

5. During the period under review, additional progress has been made in implementing the outstanding provisions of the Bangui Agreements and other major political reforms. On 29 January, the Commission on the Restructuring of the

5. During the period under review, additional progress has been made in implementing the outstanding provisions of the Bangui Agreements and other major political reforms. On 29 January, the Commission on the Restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces, chaired by the Minister of Defence and working under the overall supervision of General Amadou Toumani Touré (Mali), Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, completed its work and recommended to the President the dissolution of the security services (namely, the Centre nationale de recherche et d'investigation and the Section d'enquête, de recherche et de documentation) and major downsizing and restructuring of the Presidential Guard. President Patassé is expected to sign decrees enacting these key recommendations into law.

6. Progress has also been made in addressing the provision of the Bangui Agreements pertaining to the abandonment of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit in respect of persons presumed to have misappropriated funds under the previous regime. The Government presented to the National Assembly a revised bill, which had been prepared with the assistance of the International Monitoring Committee. The regular session of the National Assembly was scheduled to be convened in March to consider this issue. However, given the urgency of the matter, the Assembly decided to hold an extraordinary session on 9 February. The law on the abandonment of the parliamentary audit was adopted on 13 February, thus implementing another major provision of the Bangui Agreements.

7. A draft electoral code was also presented to the extraordinary session of the National Assembly. On 16 February, however, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the electoral code until its regular session.

8. The National Reconciliation Conference, originally scheduled for 10 to 14 February 1998, has been postponed until 23 to 28 February to allow additional time for the necessary preparations. The political parties, with the support of the International Monitoring Committee and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are actively engaged in preparations for the event, which should play a decisive role in consolidating the peace and reconciliation process. On 19 February, a meeting was convened with all main political actors to evaluate the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, and it was judged to have yielded satisfactory results.

III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

9. The economic and social situation in the country has remained largely unchanged. The arrears in payments to public servants, soldiers, pensioners and students continue to be a cause for concern and to give rise to strikes in various public sectors.

10. Missions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank visited Bangui from 3 to 17 February 1998 to review the economic and financial situation, as well as the 1998 budget, structural reform plans for the current year and medium-term programmes. Discussions conducted by those missions have reportedly led to solid progress in putting into place a preliminary cash treasury plan for 1998, as well as in identifying a number of key elements that

could form the basis for a comprehensive medium-term structural adjustment programme. The World Bank and IMF missions are scheduled to return to Bangui in the near future to help the authorities finalize a policy framework document. It is clear that substantial technical and financial support from the international community will be necessary to implement the proposed adjustment programme. At the same time, the Bretton Woods institutions have repeatedly stressed that adequate security conditions are absolutely essential for the success of the necessary economic and financial reforms.

IV. SECURITY ASPECTS

11. The overall security situation in the Central African Republic has improved steadily, but is still a cause for concern. While relative calm has been established in Bangui owing to the presence and active operations of MISAB, banditry/armed robbery is a major problem, in particular in the interior of the country. Light weapons remain in circulation and can also easily be acquired from neighbouring countries. The security situation remains precarious. According to some reports, elements of the former armed forces of Zaire have found refuge in the southern part of the Central African Republic, while local militias are present in the northern areas of the country.

12. The recommendations of the Commission on the Restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces are generally in accord with the Bangui Agreements and with the statements made by President Patassé earlier this year indicating his intention to create a national, republican and multi-ethnic army, whose size and activities would be in line with national budgetary capacity. It is hoped that those recommendations will be adopted promptly and signed into law.

13. Closely connected to and supportive of this restructuring programme is the demobilization and reinsertion project, which is coordinated and conducted by UNDP in close collaboration with the Government. This project, which was officially launched on 11 January 1998, is aimed at demobilizing over 1,000 members of the Central African armed forces.

14. Lasting stability and security in the country will ultimately depend, inter alia, on the transformation of the Central African defence and security forces into a reliable professional corps dedicated to respect for the rule of law. The initiatives launched towards that end must be actively and systematically pursued. While the main responsibility for these important reforms rests with the Government, it is essential that the international community support the Government in carrying them out through bilateral assistance programmes. I therefore call on potential donors, in particular those with traditionally close ties to the country, to contribute generously to these endeavours.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

15. As noted above, since my report of 23 January 1998, significant progress has been made in implementing the Bangui Agreements and in initiating essential political and economic reforms in the Central African Republic. Credit for

these important developments is mainly due to the people of the Central African Republic and the leadership of the country. However, this progress could not have been achieved without the untiring efforts of the leaders of the region, and, in particular, the International Mediation Committee and the International Monitoring Committee, which, with the support of UNDP, have played a crucial role in stabilizing the situation in the country following the three mutinies of 1996.

16. At the same time, much remains to be done to ensure a lasting peace in the Central African Republic. While the National Reconciliation Conference could become an important milestone towards genuine national reconciliation and the full implementation of the Bangui Agreements, the important declarations made by the Government in this regard must be expeditiously translated into concrete action.

17. It is also imperative that an electoral code, addressing crucial issues, including the composition and chairmanship of the Electoral Commission, be adopted as soon as possible, if legislative elections are to be conducted as scheduled in August/September 1998. The limited time-frame and daunting logistical difficulties facing the electoral process represent a real challenge. The conduct of the elections will require a major effort on the part of the Government, which must allocate the necessary funds for it. Substantial and urgent assistance will be required from donor countries, including in the areas of civic education, registration and public information.

18. Furthermore, it is essential that substantial economic and financial reforms be undertaken urgently. Unless rapid and far-reaching measures aimed at the financial and economic recovery of the country are implemented, the present socio-economic conditions are likely to continue seriously to undermine the overall security and stability of the country.

19. In addition, it is vital that the Government take the necessary steps to reform and train the national army, police and gendarmerie in order to enhance their capacity to maintain law and order effectively.

20. In the light of recent developments, I believe that the observations and recommendations presented in my report of 23 January on the situation in the Central African Republic remain valid. It is obvious that the progress achieved towards national reconciliation is still fragile and that the situation is far from being irreversible. By all accounts, political leaders of Member States participating in MISAB have played a remarkable role in bringing about positive changes in the Central African Republic. However, MISAB will not be able to continue its presence in Bangui without external financial and logistical support. Consequently, without a credible successor force, the situation in the country is likely to deteriorate rapidly, with serious implications for the humanitarian situation and peace and security in the region.

21. If security and stability in the Central African Republic, and indeed in the subregion, are to be maintained, and further progress is to be made towards sustainable national reconciliation, the only viable option remains the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to take over from MISAB. It will be recalled that, by its resolution 1152 (1998), the Security

Council authorized the continued conduct by Member States participating in MISAB of their operation in the Central African Republic until 16 March and expressed its intention to take a decision by that date on the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic on the basis of the present report.

22. Given the progress made in implementing the Bangui Agreements and the commitments expressed in President Patassé's letter of 8 January 1998 (S/1998/61, annex), I recommend that the Security Council examine carefully the facts given in the present report in order to consider the establishment of a peacekeeping operation as described in the annex to the present report. Cost estimates for the new operation will be issued shortly as an addendum to the present report.

23. Were the Council to so decide, the establishment of the mission and the implementation of its mandate would present a major political and logistical challenge to the United Nations troop-contributing countries and interested Member States. The mission would have to rely heavily on the readiness of all interested countries to remain closely involved in the peace process and to assist in every possible way, including through the provision of logistical back-up. I am pleased to inform the Security Council that the Government of France has conveyed to the Secretariat its willingness to provide the United Nations peacekeeping operation with logistical and medical support, as well as its readiness to participate in the evacuation of United Nations personnel in case of emergency.

24. In accordance with the plans contained in the annex to the present report, I recommend that the Security Council decide that the duration of the operation be limited to 90 days after the announcement of legislative election results, and that the initial mandate of the United Nations mission be established for a period of three months in order to allow the Council to review the implementation of the commitments made by the Government of the Central African Republic. I also recommend that the Council approve the special arrangements, which would allow a smooth transition towards the new operation, and authorize the continued conduct of MISAB until 15 April 1998. In this connection, I would like to stress that the support of MISAB troop contributors will be essential for the success of the United Nations effort. In the meantime, as recommended in resolution 1152 (1998), I intend to appoint a Special Representative to the Central African Republic, who would assist the parties in the implementation of the Bangui Agreements.

25. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude once again to the Member States participating in MISAB and to the International Mediation Committee and the International Monitoring Committee, as well as to United Nations programmes and agencies operating in the Central African Republic, for their invaluable efforts to bring national reconciliation and stability to that country.

Annex

MANDATE AND CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS OF THE PROPOSED UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

A. Introduction

1. While some additional progress has been made in implementing the Bangui Agreements and MISAB has succeeded in establishing relative calm and security in Bangui, the overall political and security situation in the Central African Republic is still a matter of concern. Substantive and active involvement of the international community continues to be required to achieve sustainable peace and a stable social environment in the country. Should the Security Council so decide, such an international presence would be established in the form of a multi-functional peacekeeping operation to be known as the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic/Mission des Nations Unies en République centrafricaine (MINURCA). The operation would have the following main goals:

(a) To assist the people of the Central African Republic to consolidate the process of national reconciliation on the basis of the full implementation of the Bangui Agreements and subsequent undertakings by promoting vital reforms through programmes supported by the international community;

(b) To assist in sustaining a secure and stable environment in the capital of the Central African Republic, which is essential for general stability in the country; to support the establishment of the necessary conditions for the holding of free and fair legislative elections to be held in August/September 1998; and to observe and verify the conduct of the elections if these conditions are met.

2. The mandate of the Mission would be of a limited duration and, subject to the decision of the Security Council, would end 90 days after the announcement of the election results. However, the actual drawdown of MINURCA would begin no later than 60 days from the date of such an announcement. In carrying out its mandate, the Mission would cooperate closely with regional initiatives, in particular the International Mediation Committee and the International Monitoring Committee, as well as with the Organization of African Unity.

B. Mandate

3. The main elements of the mandate of MINURCA would be:

(a) Political:

(i) To assist in the implementation of major reforms pursuant to the Bangui Agreements and the decisions of the National Reconciliation Conference by promoting national reconciliation and providing good offices and mediation between the Government and political parties in the country;

(ii) To provide coordination, political guidance and support to all United Nations activities in the country;

(iii) To cooperate with other international partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions, with the objective of supporting activities aimed at establishing the foundations for lasting peace, national reconstruction and development;

(iv) To provide advice and facilitate technical assistance in the areas of good governance and promotion of human rights;

(b) Military:

(i) To assist in maintaining and enhancing security and stability, including freedom of movement, in Bangui and the immediate vicinity of the city, thus assisting the Central African authorities in maintaining a secure environment throughout the country;

(ii) To assist the national security forces in maintaining law and order and in protecting key installations in Bangui;

(iii) To supervise and control the storage of all weapons retrieved in the course of the disarmament exercise;

(iv) To assist in the establishment of an environment conducive to the holding of free and fair legislative elections;

(v) To ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel and the safety and security of United Nations property;

(c) Police:

(i) To assist in the training of trainers and other capacity-building efforts of the national police and gendarmerie, to provide advice for the restructuring of security forces and to coordinate international technical assistance;

(ii) To monitor the neutrality of the security forces before and during the elections;

(d) Electoral:

(i) To provide advice to the national electoral bodies and coordinate international technical assistance for the conduct of the legislative elections;

(ii) To monitor the preparations for the elections and determine whether the requirements for holding free and fair elections are fulfilled;

(iii) To observe the elections and verify the results of the elections, provided those requirements are fulfilled.

C. Concept of operations

Political aspects

4. To pursue the political goals outlined above, the Mission would be headed by a Special Representative with an office comprised of the necessary political, legal, public information and human rights staff operating in Bangui. My Special Representative would assist in the implementation of the reforms necessary to achieve national reconciliation and stability in the country. The Special Representative would have overall authority over all United Nations activities in the Central African Republic in support of the Mission's mandate. In order to ensure optimal coordination, the United Nations Resident Coordinator/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative would concurrently serve as Director of the Office of the Special Representative.

5. Because of a lack of reliable infrastructure in the country, the Mission would include a small public information component. In close coordination with UNDP, two international staff would prepare information on United Nations activities and major developments in the country for dissemination through the local media. In close collaboration with donors and non-governmental organizations, the Mission would launch a United Nations radio programme to promote national reconciliation and the goals of the Mission, including the dissemination of information on the electoral process. Two human rights experts would be attached to the Mission in order to provide, as requested by the Government, advice to the national authorities and organizations on human rights issues and to identify technical assistance needs for capacity-building in this important area. The experts would, through my Special Representative, coordinate with and seek guidance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

6. A special coordination and implementation mechanism could be established, to be co-chaired by my Special Representative and the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, in which the Government, representatives of the opposition and major donors would participate. The United Nations, with the assistance of UNDP and other donors, would provide a small technical secretariat for such a mechanism.

Military aspects

7. The task of maintaining a secure environment in Bangui and its immediate vicinity requires the deployment of an international military force with sufficient capability not only to carry out the Mission's mandate, but also to provide credible protection to United Nations personnel and property, should the situation deteriorate. In addition, the force and the whole Mission would have to rely on the readiness of a major military power to provide "over-the-horizon" deterrence and assistance in case of emergency evacuation or other major threats.

8. To assist in maintaining security in Bangui, a city with a population of between 500,000 and 600,000, a United Nations force consisting of six mechanized infantry companies, each approximately 120 to 150 personnel strong, would be

required. The infantry would establish and maintain over 30 stationary and mobile patrols/checkpoints on a 24-hour basis in various parts of the city. They would also provide security to key installations in Bangui and guard collection/storage areas for heavy weapons, all of which should be placed under United Nations control. The force would be able to provide some security and logistical support for the demobilization programme coordinated by UNDP. If need be, it would assist in investigating violations of the Bangui Agreements in the military area.

9. At the same time, a reinforced infantry company would be needed to guard the M'Poko airbase, which would be vital for the Mission as the main entry, exit and resupply point, as well as Mission headquarters and other key United Nations facilities. In addition, in order to be able to provide a swift and flexible response to any serious threat and to compensate for the withdrawal of the French combat units from the Central African Republic, a special reinforced squadron of light armoured vehicles, supported by a heavy mortar platoon, would be required to respond to possible aggressive action from areas around the city.

10. A military logistic unit of up to 150 personnel should be attached to the force to support the military and other components of the Mission in the absence of the necessary facilities in the Central African Republic. Such a unit would be capable of providing maintenance of military equipment and transportation of basic supplies. It is envisaged that substantial parts of MINURCA logistical support would be routed through the closest seaport, Douala, Cameroon, which would necessitate a well-balanced mix of surface and air transport.

11. With the poor road infrastructure and acute shortage of transportation, and in order to ensure a long-range medical evacuation capacity, it would be desirable to assign to the Mission two fixed-wing aircraft, which would preferably be civilian-contracted. At the same time, for urgent evacuation over short distances, resupply and reconnaissance around the capital, three medium-lift utility helicopters operated by a military unit not exceeding 50 personnel would be needed.

12. To establish reliable radio and telephone communications links between the force headquarters and its military units, a small military signals unit may be required. However, a civilian communications network would be necessary to provide links on the ground and to liaise with United Nations Headquarters. In view of the limited medical infrastructure in the Central African Republic, a military medical unit would be deployed to provide medical support to United Nations civilian and military personnel. Such a unit would provide level 2 medical assistance, while level 3 emergencies would be referred to other medical facilities elsewhere in the region.

13. At the same time, a force headquarters totalling up to 75 personnel, which would also contribute to the integrated operations and logistics systems of MINURCA, would have to provide command, control and liaison functions.

14. In view of the considerations and challenging tasks presented above, it is estimated that the minimum strength of the force necessary to perform the military mandate of the Mission would be approximately 1,400 personnel all ranks. However, I will continue to review the requirements of the force in

light of developments in the security situation, particularly any requirement to deploy outside Bangui and the need to achieve maximum efficiency and economy.

Police aspects

15. Both the national gendarmerie and the national police suffer from an acute lack of equipment and professional training. To design and conduct training-of-trainers programmes for the police and, to some extent, for the national gendarmerie, the Mission would rely on the services of up to 24 civilian police experts/observers. Such a small civilian police unit would also monitor the implementation of the restructuring plans for the Central African security forces and assist in mobilizing and coordinating international technical assistance. Finally, United Nations police observers would monitor the neutrality of the national police and gendarmerie in Bangui and several key areas of the country before and during the legislative elections. United Nations staff would monitor the electoral campaign by attending public meetings and demonstrations, liaising with the local police authorities, investigating allegations of human rights abuses and conducting other relevant activities.

Electoral aspects

16. An Electoral Unit of three electoral officers would be included in the Mission to assist, in collaboration with UNDP, the Central African authorities with planning and technical support for the legislative elections scheduled for August/September 1998. In due course, electoral observers drawn primarily from United Nations programmes and agencies in the Central African Republic and in the region, as well as other international personnel, would be recruited to establish a presence in the interior of the country. The Unit would also be in charge of coordinating the possible presence of other international electoral observers. The United Nations would also work to mobilize and coordinate the international assistance necessary for the successful conduct of the elections. Such assistance would supplement the considerable efforts that will have to be made by the Central African authorities to overcome significant logistical and financial constraints.

Administrative aspects

17. The complex nature of the proposed Mission would require the establishment of a reliable civilian logistical back-up in Bangui, and later, during the legislative elections, in some other areas of the country. It is anticipated that the Government of the Central African Republic will provide a substantial contribution to the operation of MINURCA by making facilities and accommodation available free of charge, as well as providing to the United Nations, at the lowest possible cost, other services and essential supplies. The above requirements would be reflected in a status-of-forces agreement to be concluded between the Government of the Central African Republic and the United Nations. At the same time, the effectiveness of the Mission would undoubtedly depend on the willingness of France to provide logistical support in the country and to maintain a presence in the region, as well as on its readiness to transfer to the United Nations some of the major assets currently available to the French military contingent in the Central African Republic.

18. A United Nations trust fund would be established to enable Member States to make voluntary contributions towards the activities of MINURCA.

D. Transitional arrangements

19. The security environment prevailing in Bangui and throughout the country strongly mitigates against any gap in the stabilization process. The only realistic approach in this regard is to rely on the military contingents already stationed in Bangui as part of the MISAB force. I have already initiated contacts with the current MISAB contributors and France, all of which have expressed their readiness, in principle, to participate in the proposed United Nations operation. The additional elements, which would perform various support functions, would have to be provided by new troop contributors, and I have approached a number of Member States in this regard.

20. Under the current very tight schedule, the establishment of the new United Nations operation will be an extremely challenging task. Therefore, to allow for a smooth transition to MINURCA, an additional extension of the mandate of MISAB would be necessary until 15 April 1998. If carefully planned and adequately supported, such a transition could be executed within a period of four to six weeks from the adoption of an enabling resolution by the Security Council. In order to carry out the transition in the most timely and efficient manner, it would be my intention, as soon as possible after the adoption of a Council resolution, to dispatch to Bangui a transition team, including an advance headquarters, of up to 45 military planners and logisticians. This process would also be greatly facilitated if France, which is currently providing critical support to MISAB, would be ready to transfer to the new United Nations operation essential equipment and facilities, as well as to provide other services to MINURCA. During the transition period, the troops currently serving under MISAB would continue to depend on full logistical back-up provided by France. However, to ensure the timely transfer of authority and overall responsibility to the United Nations, I would seek expeditiously an initial budgetary and procurement authorization from the appropriate United Nations bodies.

21. The formal establishment of the new Mission would be accompanied by a transfer of authority of MISAB forces, totalling some 800 personnel, to United Nations command, which would be conducted on 15 April 1998, concurrent with the phased rotation of fresh troops into the mission area. As described above, additional units to provide operational and support services currently performed by the French troops (who are scheduled to depart the Central African Republic by 15 April), should be deployed to Bangui not later than by mid-April 1998.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/148/Add.1
25 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 1152 (1998) CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Addendum

1. As indicated in section V of my report dated 23 February 1998 (S/1998/148), I wish to inform the Security Council that should it decide to authorize the establishment of a United Nations mission in the Central African Republic, it is estimated that the total cost of the mission would amount to some $70.2 million gross for a nine-month period based on the mandate and concept of operations contained in the annex to my report.

2. The estimate provides for the deployment of 45 military planners and logisticians supported by 38 international and 11 local staff for an advance headquarters during the transition period, and thereafter of 1,400 military contingent personnel of all ranks, 24 civilian police and an additional 63 international and 59 local staff, as well as 200 electoral observers during the elections. A breakdown of the estimated requirements by the main categories of expenditure is provided for information purposes in the annex to the present addendum.

3. It would be my recommendation to the General Assembly, should the Security Council decide to establish a United Nations mission in the Central African Republic, that the related costs should be considered an expense of the Organization to be borne by Member States in accordance with Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and that the assessments to be levied on Member States should be credited to a special account to be established for that purpose.

Annex

Cost estimates for the nine-month period of a United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	Category	Cost estimate
1.	Military personnel costs	36 230
2.	Civilian personnel costs	11 490
3.	Premises/accommodation	1 450
4.	Infrastructure repairs	-
5.	Transport operations	2 380
6.	Air operations	8 900
7.	Naval operations	-
8.	Communications	1 050
9.	Other equipment	1 430
10.	Supplies and services	640
11.	Election-related supplies and services	80
12.	Public information programmes	60
13.	Training programmes	120
14.	Mine-clearing programmes	-
15.	Disarmament and demobilization programmes	-
16.	Air and surface freight	5 100
17.	Staff assessment	1 270
	Total	70 200

UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/800
S/1998/149
23 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda item 61
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 23 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to a new violation of the flight information region of Nicosia by two military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force on 26 January 1998. On that day, at 13.30 hours, two Turkish F-16 military planes entered the Nicosia flight information region from a north-westerly direction, exiting at 14.26 in a northerly direction.

As stated in my previous letters, such unauthorized intrusions into the Nicosia flight information region are in violation of international law and international air traffic regulations.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to protest strongly against the new violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, which is in complete disregard of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotirios ZACKHEOS
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Cyprus
to the United Nations

98-04092 (E) 230298

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/53/70
S/1998/150
23 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Item 54 of the preliminary list*
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION
OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 23 February 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of the message sent to you today by His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan (see annex). It would be appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 54 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Khalid Aziz BABAR
Acting Permanent Representative

* A/53/50.

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ANNEX

Message dated 23 February 1998 from the Prime Minister of Pakistan to the Secretary-General

I have just learned with great satisfaction that you have successfully reached an agreement with the Iraqi leadership on the weapons inspection issue, which, if approved by the Security Council, will, it is hoped, resolve the crisis in the Gulf. This would represent the success of diplomacy rather than the use of force.

I note that one of the key elements in the accord is ensuring respect for Security Council resolutions governing the inspection regime in Iraq. This illustrates what I had mentioned in my letter to you of 21 February that the implementation of all Security Council resolutions, whether they pertain to Iraq, Kashmir, Lebanon, Palestine or any other issue, is critical for the maintenance of global and regional peace and security.

The second main element of the agreement, which pertains to the preservation of the integrity of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with overseeing the disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, further highlights the need for the implementation of all Security Council resolutions in letter and spirit.

The Security Council decision to increase the oil-for-food programme for Iraq, authorizing the latter to sell US$ 5.2 billion worth of oil every six months, is also a welcome development. This will contribute to alleviating the sufferings of the people of Iraq.

Muhammad Nawaz SHARIF

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/151
23 February 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 20 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I hereby have the honour to transmit the text of the joint Russian-Chinese statement on Iraq adopted at the conclusion of the meeting in Moscow on 17 February 1998 between the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, and the Prime Minister of China, Mr. Li Peng (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

Annex

Joint statement

The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, and the Prime Minister of China, Mr. Li Peng, discussed in detail the situation that is developing with respect to Iraq. Both sides expressed deep concern at the dangerous turn taken by events.

The Russian Federation and China, as permanent members of the Security Council, do not accept a solution involving the use of force, and advocate a political settlement of the crisis which would ensure that Iraq fully implements the relevant resolutions of the Council, guarantee the elimination of Iraq's potential for weapons of mass destruction and open the way to the lifting of the sanctions on Iraq, above all the oil embargo.

In the context of the active efforts currently being undertaken to find such a solution, particular importance attaches to the mission of the Secretary-General to Baghdad, which deserves the full support of the international community.

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/152
23 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 23 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose the text of the communiqué of the Sixth Regional Summit on the Burundi Conflict, held in Kampala on 21 February 1998.

Please circulate the text of this communiqué as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Njuguna M. MAHUGU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-04141 (E) 240298

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Annex

Communiqué of the Sixth Regional Summit on the Burundi Conflict, held at Kampala on 21 February 1998

1. At the invitation of President Yoweri K. Museveni of the Republic of Uganda, the Sixth Regional Summit on Burundi convened in Kampala on 21 February 1998, and was attended by President Daniel arap Moi of the Republic of Kenya; President Frederick Chiluba of the Republic of Zambia; President Benjamin Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania; Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; Mr. Stanislaus I. G. Mudenge, Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe, representing Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); Mr. Anastase Gasana, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, representing President Pasteur Bizimungu of the Republic of Rwanda; and Mr. Bizima Karaha, Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representing President Laurent-Desiré Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2. Also participating were the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, and the OAU Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim.

3. At the invitation of the regional leaders, Major Pierre Buyoya briefed the Summit on the political situation in Burundi and on the various steps that he has been taking in the country since the Dar es Salaam Summit of 3 to 4 September 1997. More specifically, he explained the various measures taken or intended to be taken in the context of the decisions of the Dar es Salaam Summit.

4. The Regional Summit reviewed the situation in Burundi and was concerned that, despite all the efforts deployed for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Burundi, no significant progress had been achieved. The Regional Summit reaffirmed that there is no alternative to a negotiated solution to the crisis in Burundi and stressed that such negotiation should lead to the attainment of a new dispensation based on the principles of democracy and security for all.

5. The Summit underscored the importance of the All Party Talks in Arusha in order to facilitate the return to constitutionalism, democracy, peace and security. In this respect the Summit urged the regime and all the parties in Burundi to genuinely respond to the Arusha peace process.

6. On the issue of sanctions, the leaders agree to review them as soon as the conditions stipulated in the Dar es Salaam Summit have been adhered to and the All Party Talks under the auspices of the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, have commenced.

7. The regional leaders reaffirmed their determination to implement all the decisions taken, including those related to sanctions, with the objective of achieving a lasting solution to the conflict in Burundi.

8. The regional leaders expressed appreciation to President Yoweri K. Museveni, the Government and people of Uganda for the warm reception and hospitality extended to them and their delegations.

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/153
24 February 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 24 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KAZAKHSTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I hereby have the honour to transmit the text of a statement by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan A. Nazarbaev, of 24 February 1998 on the results of your mission to Baghdad (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Akmaral Kh. ARYSTANBEKOVA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-04303 (E) 240298 240298

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Annex

Statement by the President of Kazakhstan of 24 February 1998

Kazakhstan welcomes the outcome of the mission of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Baghdad. Thanks to the diplomatic skills of the head of the world Organization and the good will demonstrated by the Iraqi leadership, it has been possible to defuse the conflict relating to Iraq and to prevent the start of military actions. An important agreement has been reached to move the negotiation process on Iraq to the Security Council.

From the very beginning, it has been our position that political means must be found of resolving the conflict situation in order to avoid military actions that would have inflicted new sufferings on the people of Iraq. We have stressed the special role of the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of the existing situation, calling for strict compliance by the Iraqi leadership with the resolutions of the Security Council. Kazakhstan firmly believes that the Security Council alone has the authority to take decisions on the use of force against any State.

We express the hope that the forthcoming discussions in the Security Council will provide an opportunity to make an objective assessment of the situation in and around Iraq and to take an appropriate decision in the interests of the world community as a whole.

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Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/154
24 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 24 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward for your information the text of a statement by the Government of Kenya on the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by the United Nations and the Government of Iraq (see annex).

It is my Government's hope that the Memorandum of Understanding will receive the Security Council's full and unanimous endorsement.

I would be obliged if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated to members of the Council.

(Signed) Njuguna M. MAHUGU, OGW
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-04351 (E) 240298

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Annex

Statement by the Government of Kenya on the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq

The Government of Kenya welcomes with appreciation the pivotal role that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has played in the search for a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the situation in Iraq.

His timely intervention in this crisis has led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and the Republic of Iraq in which the Republic of Iraq has reconfirmed its acceptance of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council and reiterated its undertaking to cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Government of Kenya welcomes and supports the Memorandum and is hopeful that the members of the Security Council will fully endorse it in a spirit of unanimity and in the interests of peace and security in the region.

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/155
25 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 20 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council, at its informal consultations on 22 December 1997, requested the Secretariat to prepare a specific technical analysis of the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone since the coup d'etat, including the effects of the imposition of sanctions. An inter-agency assessment mission led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was sent to the region to undertake such analysis. However, because of the deterioration of the security conditions in Sierra Leone, the mission worked in Conakry and prepared an interim report, drawing on information and analysis provided by United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations active in Sierra Leone.

I would like therefore to make available to you, and through you to the members of the Security Council, the interim report of the inter-agency mission. I would like, in particular, to draw the attention of the Council to the recommendations of the report. I am confident that these recommendations will receive the full consideration of the members of the Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

98-04422 (E) 250298

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Annex

Interim report of the inter-agency mission to Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. The UN Security Council in its informal consultations on 22 December 1997 requested a technical analysis of the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone since the coup d'état , including the effect of the imposition of UN sanctions and ECOWAS embargo. In light of the difficulties encountered by humanitarian agencies in providing assistance to vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone under the sanctions regime and ECOWAS embargo, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) sent an expert mission to the region. The inter-agency mission, currently in Guinea, aims at assessing the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone and measuring to what extent this situation has deteriorated under the UN sanctions and ECOWAS embargo, particularly in terms of the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The mission is expected to recommend practical steps to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone, and the monitoring of the humanitarian impact of the sanctions and ECOWAS embargo. The inter-agency mission is composed of Claude Bruderlein, team leader, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mr. Adeel Ahmed (OCHA), Dr. Anne Vincent (UNICEF), Mr. Imran Riza (UNHCR), Dr. Idrissa Sow (WHO), Mr. Mamadou M'Baye (WFP) and Mr. Modem Lawson-Betum (OSESG).

2. The mission arrived in Conakry, Guinea on 5 February 1998 and was scheduled to visit Freetown and other areas of Sierra Leone from 9 to 16 February 1998. During the mission's initial consultations in Conakry with UN agencies and NGOs the security situation in Sierra Leone deteriorated significantly with the intensification of armed confrontations in several areas of the country between AFRC and ECOMOG forces in the Freetown area, and around the provincial towns of Bo and Kenema with Civil Defense Units, known as Kamajors. These military developments are presently preventing the mission from entering Sierra Leone and will continue to do so for the immediate future. The increased military activity has heightened the need for the supply of vital humanitarian assistance to the humanitarian agencies and organizations engaged in Sierra Leone. Consequently, the mission has prepared this interim report. This report provides to the ERC the latest information about the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone and the mission's preliminary recommendations for the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to the population affected by the hostilities under the UN sanctions regime and the ECOWAS embargo.

3. The United Nations ranks Sierra Leone as the second least developed nation, after Niger. Per capita income stands at $160 a year; life expectancy at 43 years. After a five-year long civil war that killed over 10,000 people and displaced several hundred thousands of people, the democratically-elected President Tejan Kabbah signed a peace treaty with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) on November 1996. A major program of resettlement of displaced persons was undertaken and significant distribution of rice seeds were performed with the support of UN agencies, donors, and humanitarian NGOs. However, further tensions within the military led to a military coup d'état on 25 May 1997. On 25 August 1997, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responded to the overthrow of the elected President Kabbah, now in exile in Guinea, by imposing a full embargo on Sierra Leone, including on humanitarian food assistance to Sierra Leone, unless exempted through an appeal process.

4. Violence continued after the military coup of 25 May, causing much suffering among civilians and provoking further displacement of population. On 8 October 1997, the UN Security Council expressed in its resolution 1132 "*its strong support for the efforts of ECOWAS to resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone*". It further decided to impose limited sanctions on Sierra Leone on the importation of fuel and other petroleum product, weapons and other related military material and to prevent travel abroad by the members of the military junta and their families. A regime of humanitarian exemptions for fuel import has been elaborated under the resolution. The Council authorized ECOWAS, in cooperation with the Kabbah Government, to ensure the implementation of the UN sanctions. However, it insisted, under paragraph 14 of the resolution, that all parties concerned should establish appropriate arrangements for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

5. On 23 October 1997, an agreement was signed between the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone, and a delegation of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). This agreement established a six-month peace plan and called for the cessation of hostilities, the demobilization of combatants, and the resumption on 14 November 1997 of humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone to be monitored by ECOMOG and UN military observers. Despite reservations regarding the association of the provision of humanitarian assistance to implementation of the peace accord, humanitarian agencies and organizations offered their cooperation to ECOWAS in establishing formal procedures to clear and process through the border humanitarian exemptions under the UN sanctions and ECOWAS embargo. Unfortunately, perhaps due to a lack of resources and expertise in this matter, ECOWAS has not been in a position yet to clear any humanitarian shipment to Sierra Leone. The lack of ECOWAS clearance has prevented food assistance from entering the country, which has caused over the last four months the complete depletion of the existing food stocks of the humanitarian agencies and NGOs in Sierra Leone. Medicine and other non-food items have been allowed to cross the border until recently when Guinean authorities are now objecting to the crossing of ICRC and MSF consignments of medicine for hospitals. The depletion of relief food stocks in-country, including therapeutic and supplementary feeding is creating an acute humanitarian impact, especially among vulnerable groups such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, and malnourished children. Furthermore, in light of recent military developments, the need for humanitarian assistance has risen sharply. Military confrontation in and around Freetown and the provincial towns of Bo and Kenema since 7 February has provoked the displacement of large numbers of civilians and has increased the burden of the few remaining health care facilities. Humanitarian NGOs and the ICRC have an acute need of resupply of this assistance in order to allow the continuation of their operations in the affected areas.

6. The mission collected and analyzed information on the humanitarian situation, including the impact of UN sanctions and the ECOWAS embargo, in four main areas: food assistance, health care, population displacement and activities of humanitarian organizations. The analysis of this information by the team focused on the prevailing linkages among the four sectors and the necessity of a comprehensive approach to the situation in Sierra Leone. This interim report presents the initial observations of the team of experts and their recommendations for each of the four areas, to advise the ERC on the response of the UN system to the latest developments of the humanitarian situation

in Sierra Leone. The information contained in this interim report was provided by UN agencies, the ICRC and humanitarian NGOs.

II. Food assistance to vulnerable groups

7. Although 85% of its land is arable, agricultural productivity in Sierra Leone is among the lowest on the globe, making the nation heavily dependent on commercial imports and international assistance to meet its food requirements. According to FAO, over 450,000 metric tons (MT) of various cereals, mainly rice, were required in 1996 to feed the Sierra Leone people. Half of this requirement had to be imported into the country to supplement local production. A quarter of the whole food requirement (110,000 MT) came from international food aid supplied through UN agencies and NGOs. Following the Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996 and the implementation of major resettlement programs of internally displaced persons in early 1997, the Committee on Food Aid on Sierra Leone composed of United Nations agencies and NGOs engaged in food assistance to Sierra Leone decided to discontinue general feeding programmes. Their new approach focuses on the return of the IDPs through food for work and food for agriculture programs and the distribution of rice and vegetable seeds, and therapeutic and supplementary feedings for the most vulnerable, including the refugees and the unaccompanied children. According to WFP, this change of strategy reduced considerably the food assistance requirements in 1997, during which period 40,000 MT of food (bulgar wheat, maize meal, oil, corn-soya blend, pulse etc) were distributed to targeted vulnerable groups by WFP and humanitarian NGOs. In addition, the substantial distribution of seeds rice and tools by FAO, EU and USAID through ICRC and NGOs prior to the coup and favorable climatic conditions allowed an increase of an estimated 15 % of the rice production at the end of 1997, according to FAO. It gave to some rural areas a certain level of food security for the first semester of 1998. This limited surplus remained in the areas of production due to the increasing instability in 1997 and the lack of fuel under the UN embargo. According to FAO and World Vision, farmers in some areas are forced to consume or sell their seeds, undermining their capacity to replant in the coming month of May.

8. Since the imposition of the ECOWAS embargo on 25 August 1997, ECOWAS members, in particular the Guinean authorities that control the only practical road access for humanitarian convoy to Sierra Leone, have prevented all bulk food assistance from entering Sierra Leone. Despite ECOWAS having agreed to UNOCHA recommendations on sanctions exemptions mechanisms, not a single relief item has crossed the border under the formal mechanism. According to MSF, ACF and Merlin, therapeutic milk were, nevertheless, allowed to cross in small quantities, including by air from Monrovia to Bo and Kenema.

9. The exiled government of President Kabbah expressed its concerns that bulk food may not reach the intended beneficiaries but may be looted by bandits or army units while in transit and stored in warehouses. In a meeting with the mission, President Kabbah stated that rice was being used in Sierra Leone as a "weapon of war". Although rice has not been distributed by UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs for years, ECOWAS members still insisted on the monitoring by ECOMOG

of any substantial amount of food entering the country. Although some food consignments were indeed looted in and around Freetown in the days after the military coup, including over 3,000 MT of WFP food aid, these incidents remained rare and localized to the region of Freetown. WFP, CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Vision were able to transport and distribute in-country stock of food throughout 1997 (approx. 14000 MT) without any major incidents in warehouses or on the road. ICRC confirmed that the security situation in the country in 1997 did not hamper its operation regarding food distribution.

10. The stocks of relief food within Sierra Leone have now been exhausted. According to WFP, its in-country stocks were depleted almost completely by December 1997. CARE, World Vision and CRS also report minimal stocks at the end of January. The impact of reduced food assistance has been offset to some degree by an improved harvest of rice in 1997. Also, continued commercial activity, through smuggling, has filled some of the gap. This commercial activity, however, is not expected to benefit the most vulnerable sections of the population which will not be able to afford the food at sharply increased prices. Some NGOs report that price of rice is up 300% since the coup. To cope with the situation, the population has turned to cassava and other secondary staples that reduced their caloric intake.

11. Although food deficiency has not yet reached alert levels for the majority of the population, pockets of increasingly serious malnutrition are evident and minimal food assistance to these vulnerable people is urgently required, in particular for malnourished children in the therapeutic and supplementary feeding centers (cf. section III). WFP, UNICEF, ICRC and NGOs estimate that the overall requirement of food assistance for therapeutic and supplementary feeding of targeted vulnerable groups amounts to 5000 MT per month. In their view, this assistance may be delivered without maintaining major in-country stocks, diminishing substantially the risk of looting. On a longer term basis, the food deficiency of Sierra Leone will have to be addressed. The 1997 rice harvest will be exhausted in the coming two months, according to WFP, FAO and several NGOs. Significant amounts of food aid may again be needed if programs of seeds transport and distribution are not implemented in the next 90 days. A number of programs for emergency agricultural inputs are being planned by NGOs funded by UNDP, FAO, EU and USAID.

12. Furthermore, the current military activities may have increased the need of food assistance to internally displaced persons, particularly in urban areas, such as Kenema, Bo and Freetown. Food must be provided to IDP camps in these areas, as well as to Liberian refugee camps to ensure a minimum subsistence level of food in these circumstances. The amounts of food required still need to be assessed. It makes however the requirement of 5,000 MT for the vulnerable groups even more urgent and imperative.

III. Nutritional status of vulnerable groups

13. Malnutrition has always been a serious concern in Sierra Leone. According to UNICEF, an estimated 35% of children under five years of age suffer from stunting. Five years of civil war have added to this chronic malnutrition a problem of acute malnutrition or wasting. Since the military coup, the nutritional status of the population has deteriorated further. According to a nutritional survey of Action Contre la Faim (ACF) conducted in December 1996 in Freetown, 5.7 % of children under five years old suffered from Global Acute Malnutrition. ACF could update its data for 1997 in many districts, including Freetown in December 1997. The results of this latest survey show a 53% increase in children suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition and a 100% increase in children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition. Other surveys at the country level show rapid deterioration of the nutritional status of the children as a precursory sign of the situation among adults. These signs are confirmed by other figures regarding the nutritional status of the population in relatively unaffected districts such as Makeni, Bombali and Tonkoli which suggest, according to UNICEF, the emergence of significant nutritional problems. The most vulnerable groups remain the children.

14. To respond to the nutritional crisis among children, humanitarian organizations including Medecins Sans Frontieres-Holland, ACF, Merlin and UNICEF, have intensified their supplementary feeding programmes targeted at children under five years of age. According to them, 460 children are currently supported by these projects for therapeutic feeding (severely malnourished children) and 2,500 for the supplementary feeding (moderately malnourished children). Children enrolled in these programmes are particularly vulnerable and totally dependant on the food and intensive medical care provided to them. The four organizations providing this assistance informed the mission that their stock of therapeutic food can cover their needs only for an additional 2 to 4 weeks considering the embargo imposed by ECOWAS. Already, the fatality among these children is rising, such as in Kambia where MSF-Holland reports a 24% increase in admissions in its therapeutic feeding center last December, and an increased fatality of 23%, 10% higher than during the two previous months. The discontinuation of food assistance to these children as a consequence of the ECOWAS embargo will lead to the death of most of these children. It is imperative that the required food assistance located in UN warehouses in Guinea be authorized to enter Sierra Leone promptly to resupply the concerned organizations.

IV. Health status and access to health care.

15. The health status of the Sierra Leone population has been poor. Life expectancy is only 43 years, one of the lowest in the world. In the areas where humanitarian organizations were in a position of assessing the health situation, the current main public health problems were malaria, respiratory infections and outbreaks of epidemic diseases such as measles and lassa fever. According to UNICEF, since May 1997, measles killed at least 400 children under five in the outbreaks reported in the districts of Koinadugu. Cholera was prevented thanks to a program of water chlorination carried out by humanitarian agencies and NGOs. However, this may be

jeopardized if the availability of chlorine is not guaranteed. WHO expects the numbers of epidemic diseases outbreaks to raise as a result of the low coverage of vaccination programs such as the one for measles (43% in 1995) and the collapse of the cold-chain. Other outbreaks of preventable diseases are expected, according to WHO, such as poliomyelitis and meningitis. It should be noted that 14% of the 504 cases of lassa fever reported in 1997 died in Kenema according to WHO, and the outbreak is still going on. The death toll of such diseases will remain high until an early warning mechanism and proper and timely response is established to limit contagion.

16. Until the military coup, according to UNICEF and humanitarian NGOs, 54% of the health care facilities were operational compare to 16% as of early 1998. There were 600 health care centres functioning prior to the coup. Only one third of the population had access to these centres. Since the coup, the number of functioning centres has dwindled to 120. UNICEF therefore estimates that only 1/15 of the population now has access to minimal health care. In all cases, health care is now only provided in the districts assisted by NGO's and international organizations. Consequently, the death rate among hospitalized patients has been rising steadily in the recent months. According to MSF-Belgium, the monthly death rate among patients hospitalized in Pujehun district hospital in November and December 1997 were respectively 16 and 22% , and 18 and 15% in the Bo district hospital. The majority of these deaths occurs within 48 hours after their admission denoting the poor health status of patients at their arrival. The situation remains unknown in the South-East, such as in Bonthe (population: 130 000) and Muyamba (pop.:250 000) districts where very limited assistance has been provided for the last 12 months.

17. In 1996, many essential drugs were available in approx. 70% of the health care facilities. The Ministry of Health is now no longer able to provide the drugs, even the most basic drugs such as paracetamol and penicillin. The availability of drugs since May 1997 is extremely limited causing sharp increase in prices in private pharmacies for essential drugs (ex.: 25% for paracetamol used as a relief for fever and pain to 50% for penicillin that is used for the treatment acute respiratory infection the third prevalent disease among children under five years old). The price of chloroquine used for the treatment of malaria, the first killer disease, has also risen considerably. The prevailing socioeconomic situation makes the drugs out of the reach for most of the population. The situation will certainly worsen in the coming months if drugs are not allowed to cross the border.

18. Although the ECOWAS embargo exempts medicine, and indeed relief organizations have taken, until recently, medical supplies into the country, these have not been sufficient to change the pattern of diseases, according to WHO. In the last two weeks, however, ICRC and MSF have been denied the entry of medical supplies into Sierra Leone, at a time when the need for these drugs is most acute. These trucks were transporting the consignments of drugs and medical supplies for the next three months of operations in major hospitals and health care facilities in the areas the most affected by the increased military activity, including Freetown.

V. Population Displacements

19. At the end of 1996 Sierra Leone had more than 1 million internally displaced persons from five years long civil war. This war also produced 240,000 Sierra Leonean refugees that took up asylum in Guinea and other countries in the subregion. In addition, Sierra Leone provides asylum to 14,000 Liberian refugees, most located at camps in and around Freetown. Several programmes by UNHCR and other agencies were underway in 1997 to repatriate and resettle the displaced populations. Events since May 1997 in Sierra Leone have both impeded repatriation and plans that were underway and have placed refugees from Liberia in extremely precarious circumstances.

20. Deterioration in the situation of all these vulnerable populations has been exacerbated by the inability to mount a cross-border relief operation under the sanctions and the embargo. The displaced populations are particularly dependent on assistance programmes of international agencies because they lack the coping mechanisms available to other vulnerable groups. They have no access to relatives for assistance nor land to cultivate for food.

21. Prior to the military coup, programs were under implementation to resettle Sierra Leone's internally displaced population during 1997. Food for work and targeted-feeding programs managed to achieve the resettlement of over 800,000 Sierra Leone's IDPs. However, the events since the coup disrupted the resettlement process. The period since the coup has led to an additional 160,000 IDPs being registered according to the inter-agency Committee on Food Aid. The actual number displaced is suspected to be much larger; lack of humanitarian access has prevented confirmation. Reports from ICRC and local NGOs indicated that the current deterioration of the security situation is displacing even more persons, particularly around Kenema and Bo and Kono.

22. While some IDPs have shifted to relatives' homes and are relying on them for sustenance, the vast majority are in need of assistance. It is suspected that increased vulnerability has led to some displaced children in urban centres being recruited by military factions. Others, in the absence of food assistance, may have been forced into prostitution and banditry, according to UN agencies and NGOs. According to assessments from NGOs currently operating within Sierra Leone, medical and food assistance to IDPs is urgently required.

23. The resettlement program should resume as soon as security conditions permit. In addition to food assistance, non-food items, shelter and transport will be required. There are currently approximately 430,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in neighbouring countries. According to UNHCR, some 260,000 are in Guinea; 160,000 are in Liberia and 10,000 in other countries. Of these, 77,000 in Guinea arrived in the country since the military coup.

24. Following the peace agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF signed in Abidjan on 30 November, 1996, plans were in place by March 1997 to promote the voluntary repatriation of over 240,000 Sierra Leoneans refugees. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) were developed and were progressively being implemented in areas targeted to benefit both returnees and

returning IDPs. According to UNHCR, there are currently 260,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea, 77,000 of whom entered in Guinea since the military coup. If security conditions improve, the impetus to return, particularly among refugees originating from urban areas, is expected to be substantial especially from Guinea. While many from areas close to their current exile such as Port Loko and Kambia may return spontaneously, arrangements will need to be made, particularly in transport and non-food items, for those from farther away-Freetown, Kenema, Bo. This caseload is mainly in Conakry and Forecariah. Finally, one of the most serious situations currently prevailing in Sierra Leone is that of the 8,000 Liberian refugees stranded in the Freetown area. This group is in an extremely vulnerable situation following a series of displacements beginning in 1991 and now have been caught in the cross-fire of recent days. Given this series of displacements, they have few coping mechanisms at their disposal. The last distribution of assistance took place in August 1997.

25. If developments over recent days result in a situation where safe passage becomes a possibility in Freetown, negotiations with ECOMOG are urgently required to effect evacuation/repatriation of this group by sea to Liberia. The option of by land transfer via Guinea appears much more problematic. UNHCR estimates there to be an additional 6,000 Liberian refugees in Kenema and Bo who are also in need of assistance, both in terms of subsistence and in arrangements being made for voluntary repatriation at the earliest possible time.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations.

26. It appears that without rapid intervention by humanitarian organizations in the coming months, the country will face a large scale food crisis, according to all the UN agencies involved. The extreme vulnerability of certain groups and in certain areas create additional humanitarian needs in terms of food assistance and health care services. UN agencies and NGOs have faced major difficulties in their plan to respond to these needs under the ECOWAS embargo. The difficulties encountered by these operational agencies to ship their humanitarian consignments into Sierra Leone has revealed a major lack of capacity on the side of ECOWAS to administer an exemptions process. Considering that for the last eight months no food assistance has been allowed to enter Sierra Leone, which is known to have an important food deficiency, it is a strong indication of the inadequacy of the procedures adopted by ECOWAS. In time of acute crisis in health care services in Freetown and elsewhere due to the intensification of armed confrontation, the recent blockade of medicine by ECOWAS confirms that the overall procedure needs to be reviewed urgently.

27. Finally, the aggravation of the humanitarian situation as a result of the intensification of the hostilities requires the agencies to review their action plan. Under this new plan for the provision of vital humanitarian assistance, cross-border shipments of humanitarian requirements should be allowed without unnecessary inspections, or other administrative procedures causing delays. Furthermore, UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs should be in a position to offer the necessary guarantees for the adequate and proportionate character of their assistance, the impartiality of their distribution and that such assistance is safely delivered to, and used by, its intended beneficiaries. Considering the fact that no significant security incidents in relation to food distribution took place

for the past 12 months outside the Freetown area, agencies believe that practical steps may certainly be taken to provide these guarantees with the appropriate distribution plan.

28. In light of these observations, the mission would like to recommend to the ERC the following:

- the ERC should draw the attention of the Security Council to the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone and request its intervention to facilitate the import, the transit and the cross-border shipment of humanitarian requirements, under the UN sanctions and ECOWAS embargo;

- the ERC should ask the UN agencies concerned that they review their action plan to respond to the current humanitarian crisis while ensuring that their assistance adequately responds to the situation and is safely delivered to the people in need. The ERC should underline the importance of preserving an impartial access to the civilian population for the purpose of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, not being subject to the control of a particular armed force engaged in the country.

Conakry, 10 February 1998